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OCCASIONAL PAPERS ON EUGENICS

NUMBER ONE

EUGENICS IN RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

THE GALTON LECTURE, 1945

Delivered on February 16th, 1945
at Manson House, London

BY

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SECOND EDITION

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FOREWORD TO THE SECOND EDITION

THIS lecture was delivered three months before the war in Europe ended. Peace was then in sight and the moment opportune for taking stock.

Five years later the retrospect of eugenics is unchanged: but its prospects are now better than then. The National Health Service Act became law in 1946; and in 1949 the Royal Commission on Population presented its report. Recommendations have been made which should give rise to important developments in our family and health services.

The revision mainly consists of added footnotes.

C. P. B.

March 1950

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EUGENICS
IN RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

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discuss how the eugenics movement had its origins in the evolution theory founded by Charles Darwin and elaborated by Herbert Spencer. In the second part, I shall describe how, in the effort to digest the implications for the human race of this upheaval of thought, various antinomies or antitheses of view were disclosed. I shall discuss four of these contrasting standpoints. In my third part, I shall very briefly review the history of the Eugenics Society since

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I. ORIGINS OF EUGENICS IN THE EVOLUTION THEORY

The word Eugenics was first used by Sir Francis Galton in 1883. Galton has been described as the father of latter-day eugenics and is the central figure of the retrospect which I shall attempt to give you. Galton was a half first-cousin of Charles Darwin, the author of *The Origin of Species*, and was profoundly influenced by this book. Indeed, the word eugenics and the system of thought which it denotes

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My lecture will be divided into four parts. In the first, I shall discuss how the eugenics movement had its origins in the evolution theory founded by Charles Darwin and elaborated by Herbert Spencer. In the second part, I shall describe how, in the effort to digest the implications for the human race of this upheaval of thought, various antinomies or antitheses of view were disclosed. I shall discuss four of these contrasting standpoints. In my third part, I shall very briefly review the history of the Eugenics Society since its foundation in 1907, paying special attention to its early years and to its recent history during the fourteen years that I have been its secretary. In my fourth and last part, I shall try to take stock of our present position and of the prospects which confront us in the future.

The material to be covered is therefore enormous. Indeed, the range is so wide that it cannot be dealt with otherwise than cursorily and inadequately in an hour's lecture. I shall be guilty of many grievous omissions, and I shall certainly fail to give fair credit to many persons to whom it is due. There are probably several people here this evening who know the early history of the Society and of the eugenics movement better than I do, and these will be especially aware of the shortcomings of my account.

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would probably not have come into existence but for the influence upon Galton's mind of the evolution theory.

This statement does not imply that before Darwin's time men were not conscious of the importance of heredity. Animal and plant breeders of the past probably had much the same general outlook as they have now; and in the affairs of man the circumstances of ancestry and of kinship played a greater part than they do today. Genealogies figure prominently in the bible and two were provided for the founder of Christianity; they are an essential feature of the traditions of the heroic age depicted by Homer no less than of the Icelandic and Scandinavian sagas; the pride of the Scottish clans and the sense of kinship carried by Scottish names were largely derived from the deeds and feuds of ancestors; and in mediaeval England the ties of blood were more recognized than in the urbanized civilization of today.

The evolution theory gave a new significance to the familiar principles of heredity and variation. Animal and plant species were now seen in a new perspective. They had not been immutably fixed but had evolved in accordance with certain dimly apprehended laws. It is today surprising that these laws were not immediately seen to have a bearing on man. I shall here quote from Galton's *Memories of My Life* both to show how greatly he was influenced by the argument of the *Origin of Species* and to illustrate how, in the years immediately following its publication in 1859, people hesitated to apply its lesson to man:

> The publication of the *Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin made a marked epoch in my own mental development, as it did in that of human thought generally. Its effect was to demolish a multitude of dogmatic barriers by a single stroke, and to arouse a spirit of rebellion against all ancient authorities whose positive and unauthenticated statements were contradicted by modern science.
>
> I doubt, however, whether any instance has occurred in which the perversity of the educated classes in misunderstanding what they attempted to discuss was more painfully conspicuous. The meaning of the simple phrase "Natural Selection" was distorted in curiously ingenious ways, and Darwinism was attacked, both in the press and pulpit, by persons who were manifestly ignorant of what they talked about. This is a striking instance of the obstructions through which new ideas have to force their way. Plain facts are apprehended in a moment, but the introduction of a new Idea is quite another matter, for it requires an alteration in the attitude and balance of the mind which may be a very repugnant and even painful process. On my part, however, I felt little difficulty in connection with the *Origin of Species*, but devoured its contents and assimilated them as fast as they were

devoured, a fact which perhaps may be ascribed to an hereditary bent of mind that both its illustrious author and myself have inherited from our common grandfather, Dr Erasmus Darwin.

So much for the influence of the *Origin of Species* on Galton. I now quote further to illustrate the second point made above, namely that the lesson of the *Origin of Species* was hesitatingly applied to man:

> [illegible] which [illegible] topic [illegible] The current views on heredity were at that time so vague and contradictory that it is difficult to summarize them [illegible] aut' [illegible] by [illegible] logians made a sharp distinction between the body and the mind of man on purely dogmatic grounds. A few passages may undoubtedly be found in the works of eminent authors that are *exceptions* to this broad generalization, for the subject of human heredity had never been squarely faced, and opinions were lax and contradictory. It *seems* hardly credible now that even the word heredity was then considered fanciful and unusual. I was chaffed by a cultured friend for adopting it from the French. [My italics.]

I have quoted the words in which Galton acknowledged his obligation to the author of the *Origin of Species*. But the debt was by no means one-sided. Galton's *Hereditary Genius* was published ten years after the *Origin*, in 1869. Darwin's response to Galton's book was recorded in a letter, thus:

> My dear Galton,—I have only read about 50 pages of your book, but I must exhale myself, else something will go wrong with my inside. I do not think I ever in all my life read anything more interesting and original—and how well and clearly you put every point! George [later Professor Sir George Darwin] who has finished the book, and who expressed himself in just the same terms, tells me that the earlier chapters are nothing in interest to the later ones! It will take me some time to get to these latter chapters, as it is read aloud to me by my wife, who is also much interested. You have made a convert of an opponent in one sense, for I have always maintained that, excepting fools men did not differ much in intell[illegible] still think this is an emi[illegible] on producing what I a[illegible] look forward [illegible]

It is, I think, remarkable that Darwin records himself as having been an opponent of the view that men differed much in intellect, and it seems probable that the reading of *Hereditary Genius* helped him to apply his theory to man. For this line of thought resulted in a book which excited almost as much interest and controversy as the *Origin of Species*. I refer to *The Descent of Man*, the first edition of which appeared in February 1871. The book contains many references to Galton's writings. Indeed, Galton's name, unmentioned in the *Origin of Species*, is, in *The Descent of Man*, quoted in connection with the following subjects: hereditary genius; gregariousness and independence in animals; the struggle between the social and personal impulses; the effects of natural selection on civilized nations, the sterility of only daughters; the fertility of people of genius; the early marriage of the poor; the ancient Greeks; the middle ages; the progress of the United States; and the notions of beauty of South African natives.

II. FOUR ANTITHESES

I have spoken at some length about the interplay between the minds of Galton and Darwin, because the exchange of ideas between these two men seems to me to call for more notice than anything else in a retrospect of eugenics. The word eugenics was first used by Galton twelve years after the publication of *The Descent of Man*. The controversies which have taken place about eugenics form but a small part of the wider and more bitter controversies which raged over the evolution theory. Eugenics had its origin in a revolution in men's minds which forced upon thinking people a revaluation of their most fundamental ideas about humanity. Controversies can centre upon facts or their interpretation, or upon values. It is, I think, true to say that opposing views on eugenics have been determined more by differences over values than over facts.

To the laws which had governed the evolution of plants and the lower animals, man was seen to constitute no exception. The human species was no more cast in an unchanging pattern than any other animal species. But unlike other species, man could consciously influence the course of his development. New vistas were disclosed. There being no fixity in human civilizations, human races or even in the human species, change was inescapable. And the change might as easily be for the worse as for the better. Man was hence enjoined to take stock of himself, to examine the factors which could lead to worse and better things, and to devise for himself a plan.

But what plan? How should the lessons of biology be applied?

What was to be the programme of practical eugenics? Many answers were possible, depending on the religious and political outlook and even upon the temperament of the "planner". Evolutionary progress, it seemed, had been achieved by a ruthless and unrelenting struggle for existence in which the weakest went to the wall. Darwin in the *Origin of Species*, and in his *Animals and Plants under Domestication*, published eight years later, had paid much attention to the process of artificial selection whereby our domesticated animals and plants have been produced from untamed ancestors. How far, if at all, should the principles followed so successfully by the breeder be applied to man?

Certain antitheses or dualities of standpoint came to be revealed among those who had assimilated Darwin's reasoning, and who were conscious of the eugenic and dysgenic possibilities confronting the human race. These dichotomies played an important part in the controversies which figure in our retrospect of eugenics, and in what follows I propose briefly to review four of them.

1. *The authoritarian and the liberal view*

The first of these issues, and perhaps the most fundamental, is that between what we call today the authoritarian and the liberal outlook.

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of artifi[illegible] and the example of the breeder of domesticated animals conduces to an authoritarian habit of mind. The breeder is a dictator. He decides what matings are best for his purpose and puts them into effect. It was easy to contend that, in assuming the guidance of his future evolution, man should take a leaf out of the stock-breeder's book. On these premises, the institution of monogamous marriage was attacked. The Superman, or the nearest approach to him that we could find, should enjoy the advantages of polygamy and should reproduce himself more widely than was possible within the narrow framework of Christian marriage. Results less far-reaching could be attained as a second best by controlling monogamous marriages and their resulting procreation. A story used to be current that a lady once suggested to Bernard Shaw [illegible]

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summit of the mountain. The stroke of the sword is supposed to express the victory of will, of youth, of insurgent and free life, over the fixity of age, the inhibitions of authority, the anachronism of outworn laws and traditions. The validity of Shaw's interpretation is open to discussion: but there can be little doubt that his account is significant and important.

From Wagner and the Saga of the Ring, we pass to Nietzsche. Nietzsche, during the early part of his life, was a reverent admirer and a close friend of Wagner. But later he passionately renounced him. This alienation has been fully documented, and had complex causes. Nietzsche was born in 1844 and died in 1900; he was thus an interested spectator of the controversies about evolution, as to which he held views which differed from Darwin's and still more from Herbert Spencer's. Though Nietzsche's work attracted little attention during his lifetime, it exerted an immense influence after his death. Nietzsche

In one respect, Nietzsche was a good prophet. The democratization of Europe, he said, encouraged the slave mentality, and the prospects for the Superman were poor except for one possibility. He foresaw in the twentieth century an era of great wars and revolutions. In these events, to quote Dr Oscar Levy, he welcomed a means for the masculinization of the world, the rearing of a higher type of man, and the creation of a new ruler caste. So far, Nietzsche has not been far wrong about the disturbances of the twentieth

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This talk about eugenically regulated marriages naturally provoked violent reactions among defenders of human liberty, and there is little doubt that it did much harm to the cause of eugenics in this country. It was opposed by people whose social values can be broadly described as liberal. To these, the idea of an organized, centralized and compulsory system of eugenics was abhorrent, although some of them admitted its show of logic. From the first, the liberal eugenist relied on the instrument of education. Better teaching of evolutionary biology would demonstrate the plastic and changeable character of human beings and disclose the possibilities both of improvement and degeneration; better education in citizenship and in the racial no less than the individual responsibilities of parenthood would result in a differential fertility that was biologically favourable.

The antithesis between the authoritarian and the liberal standpoints in this matter has more than an academic interest; for it eventually came to play a dominating part in world politics. The authoritarian position was adopted in Germany where it became identified with those doctrines of race which, perhaps more than any other, provide the philosophical basis of National-Socialism, and justify the aggressive policies which have twice disrupted the world.

Eugenics and racialism in Germany

Let us briefly consider the development of eugenics in Germany, which differs in important respects from its history in this country.

In the saga of Siegfried and the Ring, the Germans have a national myth basically resembling our allegory of St. George. Both Siegfried and St. George slew dragons. But the Siegfried myth has played an incomparably more important role in shaping national consciousness, and has had the advantage of having been put to supreme music by Wagner. It thus came to provide for some Germans a religion alternative to Christianity. It will be recalled that General Ludendorf wished to replace Christianity by the cult of Wotan and Valhalla. The Niebelungen saga has been memorably interpreted by Mr. Bernard Shaw in his book *The Perfect Wagnerite*. Briefly, the figure of Siegfried is held to incarnate, in the person of the Superman, the Bergsonian *élan vital*, and the myth to symbolize the process by which human needs, or the developmental impulse of life, bursts the restraining fetters of human laws and institutions. The crucial moment of the operatic drama is the meeting of Siegfried and Wotan at the foot of a mountain Wotan, carrying a spear on the haft of which are engraved the articles of the law, bars the way to Siegfried, who is armed with the sword Nothung or "needed". Siegfried raises his sword, breaks the spear in two, and passes unopposed to the

2. *The classified versus the classless society*

A second antithesis which has figured prominently in the literature relates to the extent that a person's social status reflects his eugenic value to the community. Divergent views have been held on this topic.

Those who hold that class and eugenic value are connected point out that intelligence, energy, resourcefulness, industriousness, enterprise, powers of leadership—all eugenically valuable qualities—lead to social promotion and to a rise in wages, salaries or profits. Petty officers are, in general, a selection of the best ratings; non-commissioned officers, warrant officers, and (in this war) officers are drawn from the best men in the ranks; foremen in factories from the good and not the bad workers. Jobs which involve responsibilities call for higher qualities than those that don't; and they are better paid. Hence a community like ours, wherein men holding the better paid jobs have fewer children than those in the worse paid, has a differential fertility which is dysgenic. A community which taxes the thrifty and successful in order to sustain the feckless and improvident reinforces the dysgenic trend.

Certain writers on eugenics have put this argument in ways that have given offence. They have seemed to speak disparagingly and contemptuously of the poor. They have made use of words like riff-raff, scum and dregs. They have, it has been alleged, given a false interpretation to the precept: Unto him who hath shall be given, from him who hath not shall be taken away.

Counter- [illegible]

[illegible] society. There are too many parasites, idlers and snobs who are artificially sustained in privileged positions by such social lifebelts as the wealth and prestige of their relatives and by class loyalties. The man *who starts* from the bottom has to contend against social and economic obstacles which are difficult to surmount. Many of the physical and mental [illegible] classes are [illegible]

[illegible] to evaluate the role of nature versus nurture, we must first make the nurture uniform.

Thus it is one of the causes underlying the process of development towards a higher quality of being.

My second quotation gives his views about the Superman:

> Every manifestation of human culture, every product of art, science and technical skill, which we see before our eyes today, is almost exclusively *the product of the Aryan creative power. This very fact fully* justifies the conclusion that it was the Aryan *alone who founded* a superior type of humanity; therefore he represents the archetype of what we understand by the term Man. He is the Prometheus of mankind, from whose shining brow the divine spark of genius has at all times flashed forth, always kindling anew that fire which, in the form of *knowledge, illumined* the dark night by drawing aside the veil of *mystery and thus showing man how to rise and become master over all* the other beings on the earth Should he be forced to disappear, a profound darkness will descend upon the earth, within a few thousand years human culture will vanish and the world will become a desert.

My third quotation bears most closely on the antithesis now being discussed between the *liberal* and the *authoritarian outlook on* eugenics. Speaking of the *purity of the German race, Hitler says:*

> In this matter, the State must assert itself as the trustee of a millennial future, in face of which the egoistic desires of the individual count for nothing and will have to give way before the ruling of the State. *In order to fulfil this duty in a practical manner, the State will have to* avail itself of modern medical discoveries. It must proclaim as unfit for procreation all those who are inflicted with some visible hereditary disease or are the carriers of it, and practical measures must be adopted to have such people rendered sterile.

Hitler goes on to describe what should be done to promote child-bearing among normal and fertile women.

Mein Kampf, from which I have quoted, was written some twenty years ago when Hitler, an impotent and lonely man, was imprisoned in a fortress. How, ten years later, he faithfully implemented his seemingly Utopian programme, is now part of history.

I hope I may be forgiven for elaborating at such length the *antithesis* between the *liberal* and the *authoritarian outlook on eugenics.* *I have done so partly* because *eugenics, theoretically* interpreted in *terms of racialism* and practically applied by authoritarian or fascist methods, has revealed itself as perhaps the most repellent and dangerous manifestation of German National Socialism; and partly because the antithesis has affected eugenic thought in this country and has influenced the policy of the Eugenics Society.

the improvement of the environment should be the concern of eugenists.

3. *Study versus practice*

A third antithesis is between the academically-minded or studious man and the practical man of action. The former is conscious of how imprecise is our knowledge of the heredity of such common and desirable things as good health, intelligence, and a happy disposition. He is also conscious of the imperfections of statistical records, especially those relating to differential fertility. Such a man contends that diagnosis should precede treatment, and pleads for well-planned and generously-subsidized research; he is cautious or even hesitant about practical policy until more is known. This is substantially the view taken up by Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders in his valuable book on Eugenics in the Home University Library.

The opposite view was taken by Professor Sir Charles Darwin in his Galton lecture of 1939, when he pointed out that reverend confidence in the certitudes of science is not the outlook of the scientist himself. We should be willing to act on probabilities and to take chances. This was also the view of Major Leonard Darwin to whom this society is in greater debt than to any other man. Other writers have expressed this standpoint in vigorous language. These people are convinced that a process of racial degeneration is taking place more quickly than is generally recognized and they feel that fo-

In its statement of Aims and Objects, the Eugenics Society distinguishes between the study and the practice of eugenics, and discusses both aspects of the subject under these headings.

4. *Negative and positive eugenics*

I need not remind this audience that negative eugenics is concerned with restricting the fertility of people who are unfit for parenthood; positive eugenics with encouraging fertility among those deemed fit for it. We have here another antithesis wherein policies can diverge. Up till about 1936, people in this country were much under the influence of Neo-Malthusian ideas. It was

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Socially, our goal should be to equalize conditions, not to intensify differences.

The Eugenics Society has contained exponents of both these views as to the eugenic significance of class. They often differ on certain questions of practical policy. Of these questions, family allowances is the most important. Those who believe that the effects of inborn qualities cannot be assessed until environmental conditions are equalized tend to favour family allowances. Those who believe that social position roughly reflects eugenic value oppose mulcting the thrifty to subsidize further the already excessive fertility of the shiftless and subnormal. These controversies are mainly focussed on flat-rate schemes of allowances. There is much less disagreement about graded schemes wherein the allowances are proportional to income, and wherein the subsidies are raised from, and redistributed among, the classes concerned.

The divergent standpoints adopted about the eugenic significance of class status often reflected political differences. The advocate of equalizing opportunities so as to minimize the influence of nurture or environment as a cause of difference was frequently a socialist; not infrequently he would plead for the abolition of property as did Mr. Bernard Shaw in his preface to *Man and Superman*. On the other hand, the person who regarded social status as the best available index of eugenic worth usually called himself an individualist. Whatever his political affiliation he was not a socialist.

Here we may also consider the sterile controversy about the relative importance of heredity and environment. The subject used to be vigorously debated with unsatisfactory results. Some people have deterministic prejudices in favour of heredity such as those of Calvinists who believe in predestination, others have egalitarian prejudices in favour of environment, such as those who believe that all men are innately free, equal and fraternal. The truth is that the two factors of heredity and environment cannot easily be measured against each other. Leonardo, Shakespeare and Newton would have been low-grade mental defectives if, when infants, they had been entirely deprived of iodine. If a child's environment is bad enough, it will die even if it has the best heredity. Professor Lancelot Hogben has, in my opinion, contributed usefully to this subject in his book *Nature and Nurture*. But the issue has a practical bearing on policy. Eugenists often declare themselves to be primarily concerned with man's inborn qualities; the improvement of the environment is other people's concern. When an application is made to the Eugenics Society to support financially a given research project, the question often arises: "Is it eugenic?" I shall return later to the subject of how far

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duced by syphilis and tuberculosis. These agencies produced what were called blastophthoric effects—from βλαστός, a bud, and φθορά, corruption or mischief. The germ plasm was thought to be injured by [illegible] effects influence [illegible] o [illegible] be one of the main tasks of eugenics.

Here we have an issue which could be settled by facts; and I think it is true to say that it was so settled. But the controversy was hotly debated both in the pages of the *Eugenics Review* and in the proceedings of the Council. Major Darwin once remarked to me that at one period he had difficulty in resisting a demand that the Society's energies and financial resources should be wholly directed into the channels of temperance reform and a campaign against venereal diseases!

G. K. Chesterton on eugenics

Before concluding this review of past issues, I should like to say something about the most scathing attack on eugenics that I know of, namely Mr. G. K. Chesterton's *Eugenics and Other Evils*, first published in 1922. Mr. Chesterton was, of course, a Roman Catholic; and in him there burned a passionate, an almost fanatical belief in human liberty.

His religious and libertarian convictions provide an undercurrent of intense seriousness to his polemical writings, a seriousness which can easily be missed in the exuberant displays of alliteration, paradox and sophisticated simplifications which mark his style. Valuing highly the essential rusticities of life, Chesterton deplored the growth of urbanization and hated the degradation which was coupled with the development of industrialism. The amassing of wealth in the hands of the few, he felt, was accompanied by abuses inflicted on the many which had stunted their bodies, stultified their minds and starved their souls. The eugenist, according to Mr Chesterton, was typically the man who, having perpetrated or condoned these outrages, refused to undo the evil he had brought about, but turned on the victims of his exploitation and condemned them as an inferior breed. These sub-human beings he then incarcerated for life in institutions, sterilized, or prevented from marrying. What to Chesterton was especially striking about the eugenist was the meanness of his motive:

> There is one strong, startling and outstanding thing about Eugenics, and that is its meanness. Wealth, and the social science supported by wealth, has tried an inhuman experiment. The experiment had entirely failed. They sought to make wealth accumulate—and they made men decay. Then, instead of confessing the error, and trying to restore the

published describing the significance and implications of reproduction rates, and there was a remarkably sudden swing over of opinion and sentiment. According to a forecast based upon trends which were then recent, this island, far from providing standing room only in a hundred years, would then contain a population scarcely larger than that of greater London today. Attention was then naturally transferred from negative to positive eugenics.

From the start, the idea of negative eugenics seemed to appeal to people of a certain temperament and outlook; that of positive eugenics to people otherwise constituted. And in the Society's early days it was found more difficult to define the eugenically desirable than the undesirable parent. Remarks such as the following were frequently made: "Though we may find it difficult to describe the type we want to breed from, we can at least recognize the people from whom we don't want to breed."

This contrast in standpoints was largely reflected in opposite attitudes towards birth control. To some writers, the practice appeared as the source of all evils: birth control was being used and abused by the very people who should have large families, and had become the main cause of racial decay. This point was vigorously put by Dr. A. P. Beddard; and birth control has been condemned by many Churchmen, who regarded the practice as intrinsically sinful.

Such arguments were met by those who contended that checks on human fertility had been in operation since time immemorial, and that birth control was a better check than abortion, infanticide, epidemics, famines and wars. Admittedly it could be abused; but it could also be constructively used. Anyhow, it had come to stay. Its advantages should be made available to everyone irrespective of class and income, but its dissemination should be coupled with education as to its proper use. Birth control did not mean suppression of births. People who talked about traffic control did not want to abolish traffic from our streets.

Blastophthoria

I have considered four pairs of contrasting views which, I believe, have been produced more by differences in the sphere of values than of facts, though facts have been adduced by both sides. But before leaving this subject of opposing standpoints, I shall mention one more issue which seems dead now, though it was lively enough at the time. I refer to the controversies about the process of blastophthoria. It used to be believed that the human germ plasm could be damaged by certain poisons in the blood stream. Of these so-called racial poisons those most discussed were alcohol, lead, and the toxins pro-

duced by syphilis and tuberculosis. These agencies produced what were called blastophthoric effects—from βλαστός, a bud, and φθορά, corruption or mischief. The germ plasm was thought to be injured by these toxins in such a way as to produce transmissible effects influencing posterity. The elimination of these poisons was held by some to be one of the main tasks of eugenics.

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Leonard Darwin. It was the creed of Nietzsche, the doctrine of the superior race, the practice of the authoritarian state. What would he have said if in 1922 he had foreseen the Utopia of *Mein Kampf* translated into the realities we have witnessed? Eloquent though he was, words would, I believe, have failed him. The history of the last twenty years compels us to respect Chesterton's polemic.

III. THE HISTORY OF THE EUGENICS SOCIETY

I have now considered as fully as time allows the ferment of ideas caused by the evolution theory and the issues which confronted eugenists during the first quarter of this century.

I shall now say something about the history of the Eugenics Society. The differences in standpoint which I have described presented serious difficulties to those responsible for guiding our policy. The Society, it should be remembered, was open for anyone interested in eugenics to join. The columns of the *Eugenics Review* provided a free forum for discussion and controversy. It was inevitable that extreme views should be put forward by enthusiasts; it was also inevitable that the extreme view, the sensational statement, the shocking proposal, should attract most notice in the Press: and many of the wilder statements were made by people who were not members of the Society. It was therefore not surprising that eugenists came to be regarded as eccentrics or even as dangerous revolutionaries.

In tracing the history of the Society since the year 1907, when the first provisional council meeting was held on November 25th, I have made use of three sources of information: past numbers of the *Eugenics Review*, of which the first appeared in April 1909; the minutes of Council and committee meetings; and the various books, papers and pamphlets written at different periods by members and non-members of the Society and now collected in our library. The volume and diversity of [illegible]
the Society c[illegible]
who made [illegible] the literature. To do justice to all this material would require a book in itself. my cursory survey is sadly inadequate.

In what follows, I shall arbitrarily limit my scope by commenting only on what seem to be prevailing opinions at different times, and on other features which, for one reason or another, are interesting in retrospect. I became secretary of the society in the year 1931. As to what happened since that date, I have first-hand knowledge.

wealth, or attempting to repair the decay, they are trying to cover their first cruel experiment with a more cruel experiment. They put a poisonous plaster on a poisoned wound. Vilest of all, they actually quote the bewilderment produced among the poor by their first blunder as a reason for allowing them to blunder again. They are prepared to arrest all the opponents of their system as mad because the system was maddening.

But over one issue, Mr. Chesterton's fears have been justified by recent history. With whom, Mr. Chesterton asked, did England go to war in 1914?

She went to war with that very band of scientific culture from which the very ideal of the Superman had come . . . She gave battle to the birthplace of nine-tenths of the professors who were the prophets of the new hope of humanity. . . . There was a province of Europe which had carried nearer to perfection than any other the type of order and foresight that are the subject of this book. It had long been the model state of all those more rational moralists who saw in science the ordered salvation of society. It was admittedly ahead of all other States in social reform. All the systematic social reforms were professedly and proudly borrowed from it. Therefore when this province of Prussia found it convenient to extend its imperial system to the neighbouring and neutral state of Belgium, all these scientific enthusiasts had a privilege not always granted to mere theorists. . . . They had the gratification of seeing their great Utopia at work, on a grand scale and very close at hand. They had not to wait, like other revolutionary idealists, for the slow approach of something nearer to their dreams; nor to leave it merely as a promise to posterity. They had not to wait for it as for a distant thing like the vision of a future state; but in the flesh they had seen their paradise. And they were very silent for five years.

The thing died at last, and the stench of it stank to the sky. It might be thought that so terrible a savour would never altogether leave the memories of men; but men's memories are unstable things. It may be that gradually these dazed dupes will gather again together and attempt again to believe their dreams and disbelieve their eyes. . . . They have seen their paragons of science and organization playing their part on land and sea, showing their love of learning at Louvain and their love of humanity at Lille. For a time at least they have believed the testimony of their senses. And if they do not believe it now, neither would they believe though one rose from the dead, though all the millions who died to destroy Prussianism stood up and testified against it.

These are the concluding words of Chesterton's book. Like all effective controversialists, he saw and believed the worst in the people he attacked. The eugenics he scathed was not that of Galton or of

The impartial reader of the above-mentioned records would, I think, be impressed with the restraint and balance maintained by the Society in such troubled waters. There were not only conflicts of standpoint on both theory and practice; there were also such clashes of personality as are inevitable when strong views are held by vigorous and outspoken people.

Early Propaganda and Studies

The two most important medical supporters of eugenics in those days were probably Dr. C. W. Saleeby and Dr. A. F. Tredgold. Dr. Saleeby was the author of several books on eugenics such as *Parenthood and Race Culture* (1909), *The Progress of Eugenics* (1914), *The Eugenic Prospect* (1921). He was an able writer and, I have been told (for I never heard him), an eloquent speaker. He was by temperament a propagandist rather than an investigator, and he espoused many causes. Much that he wrote was pitched on a high note of moral aspiration, and he resorted much to quotations from poetry; he could denounce with [illegible]

[illegible] probably the best-known propagandist of eugenics.

Another prominent figure, though not a member of our Society, was Professor Karl Pearson, the first director of the Eugenics Laboratory at University College, which was founded by Sir Francis Galton. The influence of Professor Pearson and of his distinguished successor Professor R. A. Fisher upon the development of eugenic thought have been very great. I spoke earlier of the distinction between the study and the practice of eugenics. The Eugenics Laboratory was concerned with study rather than practice and it was on the occasion of its foundation that was formulated the well-known definition of eugenics as "the study of agencies under social control that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations either physically or mentally". This definition is, in my opinion, better suited to the needs of the Eugenics Laboratory than of our Society; for it defines eugenics as a *study*. Nothing is said in the definition about eugenics being a practice. For our purposes, I prefer a description of eugenics which Galton gave in another context, as "the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of the race; also with those that develop them to the utmost advantage". This formula takes into account both study and practice.

But to return to Karl Pearson. If it is true that Dr. Saleeby was a propagandist rather than an investigator, it is also true that Pearson

Beginnings of the Eugenics Society

From the start, Sir Francis Galton was the Society's Honorary President. Its first President was Sir James Crichton-Brown, and its second, from 1909 to 1911, Mr. Montague Crackanthorpe, K.C., who, under the title "The Eugenic Field", wrote the first article in the first issue of the *Review*. The article begins with a general retrospect of eugenics from the much-quoted Theognis and Plato to Galton, who is described as the founder of "latter-day eugenics". Next, the subject of heredity is considered under the headings of alcoholism, feeble-mindedness, tuberculosis and syphilis—a classification which today strikes us as peculiar. Then follows a discussion of positive eugenics, where it is submitted that the fit, the right people to be born, are those "who give most promise of civic worth". The concluding section headed "The tree of knowledge" deplores the difficulty of getting published in England translations of the works of Forel and Bloch on sexual questions, urges the spreading of knowledge about the laws of life, and rebuts the charge that the methods of eugenics are materialistic.

What struck me about the early activities of the Society and issues of the *Review* were the following:

The earnest moral tone of the writers. There was much discussion about the ethics of the eugenic ideal—its compatibility with the Christian ethic and the ethic of humanitarianism Thus in a lecture given at a members' meeting in May 1908 on "Mental Integrity and How to Attain It", there seemed to be more concern about getting the principles of eugenics accepted, especially its moral principles, than about how those principles should be applied in practice.

Another feature is the attention paid to Herbert Spencer and especially to his essay on education and his "law" that there existed a biological antithesis between what he called individuation and reproduction. His dictum was much quoted that "You cannot get golden conduct out of leaden instincts".

Also apparent is the vitality shown by the Society in these early years. These qualities were largely a reflection of the personality of the society's capable and enthusiastic secretary, Mrs. Gotto, who is probably better known to you as Mrs. Neville Rolfe. She surrounded herself with a band of keen helpers who seemed, in those days, to have more leisure than their successors today One of the many difficulties that now confront the secretary of a voluntary society is that all the people whose help is most valuable are busy and have little time. One can't help looking back on those leisured days with feelings of envy.

to call a Social Problem Group. This group was essentially the same as that which had, for the preceding twenty years, been the subject of Mr. E. J. Lidbetter's researches. The Wood Committee had been concerned with mental deficiency—its incidence and the measures adopted for its social control. They had come to the conclusion that there were good reasons for thinking that there had been an actual increase in mental deficiency in the course of the preceding twenty years; they drew attention to how the bulk of mental defectives came from the Social Problem Group; and they recommended that Colonies and Institutions for mental defectives should be regarded rather as flowing streams than as stagnant pools; that is to say as places where defectives could be trained and "socialized" with a view to establishing them in the general community rather than as life-long homes. Their recommendations provided a good case for the use of voluntary sterilization as a measure auxiliary to segregation. The Council appointed a committee to devise a practical policy for voluntary eugenic sterilization. In various pamphlets and other publications, the committee put its case. Indeed, the committee defined its position in the most succinct of ways—namely in two draft Bills such as might be presented to Parliament. After two years of active public discussion and debate, the subject was referred to a Departmental Committee (the Brock Committee) which, in January 1934, produced a report containing proposals which hardly differed from those of the Society. The Brock Committee's recommendations have not yet been implemented by Parliament.

Another subject which is comprised within the wide field of medicine is birth control. The Council took the view that existing methods were largely impracticable by the very people who, on eugenic grounds, should use them most, and that there was a need for simpler and more fool-proof methods. It encouraged and subsidized research on this subject which resulted in the discovery by Dr. J. R. Baker of chemical substances with much higher spermicidal powers than any previously known.

The Council approved a suggestion put to it by Dr. J. A. Ryle, now professor of Social Medicine at Oxford, that it should produce a book which would help doctors in the difficult task of appropriately advising patients who consulted them on whether, in view of the incidence in their families of hereditary abnormalities, they should have children. There resulted in 1934 a symposium under the title *The Chances of Morbid Inheritance*, published by Messrs. H. K. Lewis, which has apparently been of help to some doctors.

In the past, many people had advocated the compulsory institution of health examinations and certificates before marriage. In 1934,

was an investigator rather than a propagandist. Much of his energy was devoted to the contention that the unbiassed investigation of human problems by statistical methods should precede the release of propaganda, the formulation of social policies and the preparation of political programmes. Some of the conclusions reached by Pearson and his collaborators were unpopular, notably those bearing on the effects of alcoholism on posterity; and Pearson was involved in some bitter controversies. But his service to the cause of eugenics was immense. His industry and that of his co-workers was remarkable; many of their publications, especially those embodied in the *Annals of Eugenics* and *The Treasury of Human Inheritance*, are classical studies of enduring value.

In 1911, the presidency of our Society was assumed by Leonard Darwin, son of the illustrious Charles, who became, so to speak, the embodiment and authoritative mouthpiece of eugenics in this country. No voluntary society could have had a wiser, a gentler and yet a firmer guide; and few presidents can have better earned the unqualified affection and undivided esteem of a Council wherein there were serious divergencies of opinion as to both theory and policy. The outstanding event of the Society's early years was the convening and the organization of the first International Eugenics Congress which was held in London during the year 1912.

The resounding success of this event was a tribute to the energy and organizing ability of Mrs. Neville Rolfe An imposing list of Vice-Presidents of the Congress was prepared, which included the name of the Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, and numerous papers were read by members of a learned and polyglot assembly.

Activities since 1929

Time compels me to jump to the year 1929 when Major Darwin resigned the Presidency in favour of Sir Bernard Mallett. Shortly afterwards there occurred an event which is desired and prayed for by all voluntary societies: we were left a large legacy which removed all financial worries and made us, by the standards of voluntary societies, rich .

I became the secretary of the Society in 1931. The presidency was assumed in 1933 by Sir Humphrey Rolleston and in 1935 by Lord Horder, who gave unstintingly of his valuable time and to whom we are most deeply indebted. The Council decided to avail themselves of the fact that I am a doctor to develop certain activities which might be described as simultaneously medical and practical. The Report of the Wood Committee, published in 1929, had drawn vivid attention to the aggregate of people which they were the first

to call a Social Problem Group. This group was essentially the same as that which had, for the preceding twenty years, been the subject of Mr. E. J. Lidbetter's researches. The Wood Committee had been concerned with mental deficiency—its incidence and the measures adopted for its social control. They had come to the conclusion that there were good reasons for thinking that there had been

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In the past, many people had advocated the compulsory institution of health examinations and certificates before marriage. In 1934,

the Council gave consideration to this matter and decided against both the principles of compulsory examination and voluntary certification. But it held that everyone should be encouraged to seek medical examination before marriage, without the examining doctor being asked to produce a certificate or a signed declaration as to the applicant's fitness or unfitness. But such examinations, to be effective, involve many delicate and difficult questions, such as of past venereal diseases or exposure thereto, of terminated pregnancies, and of anxieties and misgivings about sexual matters. There were good reasons for thinking that many doctors were in doubt as to how to proceed in conducting these examinations. The Council therefore appointed a committee to go into the problem. There resulted the Society's Pre-marital Health Schedule, for which there has been a fair demand from the medical profession. Indeed, the British Medical Association has latterly been in the habit of referring to the Society doctors who have applied to the Association for information on this subject.

The Council decided to pursue the investigation of the Social Problem Group. It subsidised the publication of the first volume of Mr. Lidbetter's researches on the incidence of pauperism and dependency, and it sponsored the preparation of a symposium by authorities on different aspects of the Group The volume was published by the Oxford University Press in 1937, and contained articles by persons with first-hand experience of the following subjects: mental retardation and deficiency, mental disorders, epilepsy, inebriety, prostitution, crime and recidivism, and pauperism.

The Society has also undertaken to advise people who want guidance on genetic problems relating to marriage and parenthood. But this service is perforce restricted to members of the Society. An essential pre-requisite of giving such guidance is the preparation of a detailed account of the applicant's family pedigree. In order to facilitate this often difficult task, there was prepared a schedule entitled *How to Prepare a Family Pedigree*, which we call our grey schedule. This document saves much time One can send it to people who ask for advice, saying in effect: "Do what this schedule tells you, and send it back to me when completed Then come to see me with your husband, wife or betrothed as the case may be." This schedule is now in continuous use.

The Council also took the initiative in preparing a family-record book wherein information can be entered from generation to generation about the members of a family It is distressing to think how, after the death of any person of middle or old age, there disappears for ever information about earlier generations which is of much

interest to descendants. Masses of old letters and other documents are burned Records, diaries, manuscripts and other biographical materials which a family historian would later give much to see, go up the chimney in smoke. The result is that most people know little about their ascendants. The family-record book which the Society has prepared—we call it our Green-backed schedule—if kept up to date from generation to generation, will provide a record similar to, but much more detailed than, the traditional family bible.

These recent activities on the part of the Council have been ably supported by two very capable editors of our quarterly Review, Mr. Eldon Moore, editor from 1928 till 1933, and his successor Dr. Maurice Newfield, who is still our editor today.*

Population Investigation Committee

I come now to one of the most noteworthy decisions of the Council of the Society—the formation of the Population Investigation Committee. But this important step calls for some explanation.

I have described here in

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sponsible propagandists. The hostility to eugenics seems to have come and gone in waves. In the early 'thirties there was such a wave of antagonism. The attack was then ably led by Professor Lancelot Hogben who took strong exception to the argument that social status was an index of eugenic value. I recall attending with Sir Bernard Mallett the inaugural address Professor Hogben delivered at the London School

attack on eugenics—biting, amusing and very pleasing to his audience. The attack has been renewed on many occasions since. It is my opinion that P

been useful to the

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eugenics. Profess

notably Professo , by several economists, and by some scientists in other fields.

This reaction against eugenics was more apparent to me than to others, because the meetings I was asked to attend

as a section of the rising generation which regarded eugenics as an expression of political reaction, as

* Dr. Newfield died in August 1949.

class-prejudice camouflaged as science. The position was further aggravated by developments in Germany, where compulsory sterilization had been legalized and where the doctrines of "race-hygiene" were taking practical shape.

Round about this time, there occurred the swing-over from a Neo-Malthusian to a pro-natalist standpoint which I have already mentioned. An over-population scare, someone remarked, had given place to a depopulation scare. There was an increasing interest in the science of demography about which few people up till then had heard. Galton had written in a prefatory chapter of *Hereditary Genius*: "It is earnestly to be hoped that inquiries will increasingly be directed into historical facts with the view of estimating the possible effects of reasonable political action in the future." Past demographic trends, and especially differential trends which are themselves part of history, provide, as Karl Pearson has vigorously argued, the standards by which we judge the reasonableness of political actions.

The implications of the decline in our national fertility were clearly described in the Galton lecture for 1935 by Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders to whom our Society, in recognition of a vast indebtedness, has recently awarded its first Galton Medal. Sir Alexander, in his lecture, recommended that the Council should call together a *representative* committee to investigate the causes of the demographic trends which he had outlined in his lecture. The Council acted on his advice, and the result was the Population Investigation Committee. The committee was concerned with inquiry and not policy; with diagnosis and not treatment While there might be differences of opinion about policy, there could be none about the need for inquiry. Important organizations—the Medical Research Council, the British Medical Association, the Royal Economic Society, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and others—appointed representatives. The Committee unanimously elected Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders its Chairman and was exceptionally fortunate in securing as its research secretary Mr. (now Professor) David Glass, today one of the leading demographers of this country The committee had an active and successful career before the war which there is now not time to recapitulate.

Propaganda

I should like to say a word about the Society's attitude to propaganda. To this, in its early days, it devoted much of its time and energy. This tradition was carried on after the last war by Mrs. Cora Hodson, one of the most loyal and hard-working servants the Society has ever had, and by Miss Hilda Pocock, an indefatigable lecturer,

who organized a valuable exhibit and prepared a film about heredity wherein Dr. Julian Huxley gave generous help. Lately, however, we have done much less propaganda. One reason for this is that there have come into existence in recent years numerous active organizations concerned with problems of the family, such as *the British* Hygiene Council, the Family Planning Association, the Marriage Guidance Council and the [illegible]

Chairman) and Mr. Clinton Chance (its Treasurer), has taken the view that if we can put forward a reasonable and convincing case that considerations of quality should be taken into account in devising a population policy, and if we can formulate sensible suggestions as to how, in practice, this can be done, many of these cognate organizations will do our propaganda for us. This campaign need not be specially conducted in the name of eugenics or of the society. Our primary object is not the glorification of the Society, nor even the glorification of the word *eugenics*; it is to get sound eugenic principles recognized, accepted and acted upon.

The Council's present policy about propaganda is to establish close and friendly relations with the many cognate organizations concerned with demography and the family; to help them with advice if this is needed and perhaps with financial support; to form with them, as occasion demands, joint committees, and not to seek either credit or advertisement. It was in this spirit that a joint Population Policies Committee was formed before the war between the Society and P.E.P.* The activities both of the Population Investigation Committee and of the Population Policies Committee were necessarily suspended during the first part of the war. But at the beginning of 1943 both were revived.

I had an experience before the war which was instructive to me. The Population Investigation Committee was consulted by the Registrar-General about the Population Statistics Bill. Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders, Professor Glass and I held three conferences with the Registrar-General and two of his colleagues in the course of which our standpoint was courteously and sympathetically considered. The result was almost entirely satisfactory to us.

To have attained this end by propaganda throughout the highways of the country would have cost us tens of [illegible] to have attempted [illegible]

* [illegible] produced, in 1948, a volume entitled *Population Policy in Great Britain.*

as considerable expenditure. As it was, we got almost all we wanted for the cost of our 'bus fares to Somerset House. If a voluntary organization has a good case, puts it in the right way, and collects the right people to speak for it, it can, *if the times and fates are auspicious*, achieve much without propaganda and publicity.

IV. EUGENICS TODAY AND TOMORROW

Hitherto, I have been considering eugenics and the activities of our society in retrospect. I now turn to the present time and to the prospects for the future. And I will say at once that at *no* time in our thirty-eight years' history have these prospects seemed more favourable.

There are three main reasons for holding this view, which I will consider serially. The first two are of domestic, the third of general interest.

1. *Basic eugenic policy*

The first relates to our own basic policy and programme; and here I must make a short recapitulation.

A difficulty which has from the first presented itself to eugenists has been the definition of the particle "eu" in the word eugenics. Who are the people whom we regard as eugenically desirable? Who are the fit? What sort of people should we, as eugenists, encourage to have large families?

This matter seems scarcely to have received the attention it deserves Galton remarked of this issue: "A considerable list of qualities can be easily compiled that nearly everyone would take into account when picking out the best specimens of his class. It would include health, energy, manliness and courteous disposition." Several people have quoted ancient Greek precedent "None but the brave deserve the fair." Courage and beauty are the most desirable qualities. Dr. Saleeby refers to "*mens sana in corpore sano*" and asks us to think in terms of worthiness and unworthiness rather than of fitness and unfitness. Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders points out that standards of value rather than of fact are in question and assumes that "a decline in physique or a decline in intelligence is undesirable". Leonard Darwin writes: "We should not attempt to lay down a single standard of excellence with the object of encouraging or discouraging parenthood in all who fall below that standard " He goes on to say that the pay a man receives provides an index of the value of the work he does, and therefore of his value to the community. The fifteenth chapter of his book, *The Need for Eugenic Reform*, ends with these words:

"We may conclude, therefore, that provided there are no signs of serious defects, patent or latent, and that wages are not being badly spent, all those individuals who are now earning a good wage ought to be classed amongst those whose fertility could with advantage be kept at a fairly high level, whilst an opposite conclusion must be arrived at in the case of the ill-paid" The same conclusion was reached by Professor Sir Charles Darwin in his Galton lecture of 1939.

Standards of eugenic value

This matter has recently received some consideration from the Council and the following is an outline of the standpoint now taken.

There are five standards of eugenic value as to the merits of which nearly everyone will agree. They are:

(1) Sound physical health and good physique.
(2) Intelligence.
(3) Social usefulness: the individual should be a valuable and co-operative member of his community with moral qualities which make him a good citizen.
(4) The individual should be free from genetic taints, i e. unlikely to carry or transmit familial diseases and defects.
(5) It is desirable that he should be a member of a big, united and well-adjusted family and that he should be fond of children.

Let us briefly consider these five qualities. There can be little disagreement about the first two. A community of sound and robust persons is preferable to one of physical weaklings, and intelligent people are preferable to morons. But the first two qualities do not necessarily connote the third—social usefulness. A man may be a fine physical specimen and intelligent; yet he may also be an idler, a parasite or a criminal. The first three qualities do not connote the fourth—freedom from genetic taints. A woman physically and mentally above the average, who plays a useful part in her community, can also be a carrier of haemophilia; or she may have near relatives suffering from hereditary physical or mental illnesses of which she may be a probable carrier. So may a man. Without the [illegible]

[illegible]

ter [illegible]

un [illegible] members are successful in life without the asset of inherited wealth, for such wealth as is inherited is much divided. They make good in a variety of callings, and often

spread themselves throughout the world. They take a pride in their name and in their "clan", and they periodically have large reunions where people belonging to three or four generations assemble. This faith and belief in one's stock has important psychological corollaries. It connotes biological vitality, a philosophical optimism, a positive attitude to life.

Other qualities could be added to these five and, as Galton remarked, each of us could compile his own list which would reflect his private system of values. But it is in terms of these five that we now mainly understand the meaning of the particle "eu".

Of these five qualities, the second, intelligence, is the only one which is quantitatively measurable. The other four can be assessed in a rough and ready way for certain specific purposes. Thus, physical fitness can be appraised for life insurance or for military service. *But there is no scale such as is provided by the intelligence quotient* by which they can be measured. There is, therefore, no single *biological* index or standard of eugenic fitness or worthiness. But is there a simple *social* index of the joint occurrence of eugenically desirable traits which could be made the basis of an acceptable social policy?

The Council thinks there is, and has recorded the fact in its last revision of its Aims and Objects which was circulated in draft to all Fellows and Members of the Society.*

The five qualities above enumerated have, as their confluent and resultant expression, the couple who, *in a community which provides good prospects for the future welfare of children, which encourages family life and inculcates a sense of its responsibilities, produce, by intention and design, a family large enough for replacement and provide for it a happy and healthy home.*

Let us consider what is implied in this achievement.

To plan the births of a well-spaced family demands intelligence, foresight and restraint. To produce deliberately a family large enough for, or in excess of, replacement implies a love of children, a sense of duty towards the community and a belief that it is worth preserving; it connotes further a desire to perpetuate family traditions, and an optimistic or positive attitude towards life. To provide a good home calls for the power to make a success of marriage and of life outside the home. All these are desirable qualities, and the emphasis is on the moral ones. But the choice, here freely exercised, of producing a large family should be made *in the full light of all medical and genetic factors*. When these factors are seriously adverse, children will not be wanted by morally responsible parents; and the birth of

* A new statement was produced in 1950.

children should be discouraged by precept and public opinion (but not by compulsion) when the desired qualities are seriously lacking.

Public opinion and negative eugenics

We can easily underestimate the powerful influence of public opinion as an instrument of negative eugenics. To illustrate what I mean, I will give a striking example. In 1934, the Brock Committee on sterilization, to which I have referred, quoted in its report the most shocking family history that I know:

> seventeen children.
>
> (1) Daughter: died of convulsions in infancy. } These two
> (2) Son: died of convulsions in infancy. } illegitimate.
> (3) Daughter: certified Mentally Deficient. In an Institution.
> (4) Son: certified as imbecile. Died at age of 11.
> (5) Son: certified as Mentally Deficient. In
>
> (9) Daughter: in service.
> (10) Son: died in infancy.
> (11) Daughter: at school, but of very low mentality.
> (12) Son: at school and of average intelligence.
> (13) Daughter: aged nine, has never been to school, Mentally Deficient; now in Institution.
> (14) Daughter: now aged eight; never been to school; in Institution.
> (15) Son: aged five, recently admitted to Institution.
> (16) Daughter: aged four.
> (17) Daughter: aged one.

The Report adds:

> It would be impossible to exaggerate the tragic possibilities which are still likely in this family's history. The children now in Institutions are likely to go back to their place of settlement on reaching the age of 16 years. Doubtless, all will have benefited from their stay and training in the Institutions, but it is extremely doubtful whether they will make satisfactory citizens and more than likely that they will themselves produce deficient offspring.

This family is remarkable because of the association
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defect—qualities such as insanity,

spread themselves throughout the world. They take a pride in their name and in their "clan", and they periodically have large reunions where people belonging to three or four generations assemble. This faith and belief in one's stock has important psychological corollaries. It connotes biological vitality, a philosophical optimism, a positive attitude to life.

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* A new statement was produced in 1950.

vironment wherein parenthood is attended by serious economic handicaps, wherein the prospects for children are bad, and wherein birth control is widely practised, it is next to impossible to effect replacement in eugenically desirable ways. Because the potential parent loves and values children, he will shrink from bringing them into a world which holds for them poor promise. His philoprogenitive instincts turn in upon themselves and are stifled. Lord Beveridge's five "giants"—Disease, Ignorance, Squalor, Idleness and Want—sterilize parenthood in those elements of the population which are eugenically valuable and promote it among its least desirable elements. This is a point which I wish Lord Beveridge had brought out more clearly in his Galton lecture in 1943 Where these five evils prevail, the improvident and feckless contribute freely to the next generation; those who cannot use the prevailing birth-control methods beget large families; and sexual, dissociated from parental, instincts determine the couse of reproduction. A voluntary system of eugenics cannot work successfully under conditions

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The eugenist is thus profoundly concerned with the nature of the environment.

Class differences

A second feature of the approach is that it avoids the thorny question of social class. There are eugenically valuable people in all social classes, though it is possible that they may be proportionately more numerous in some classes and occupations than others. The policy here envisaged operates without reference to class The unskilled labourer and his wife who have by design three or four children, providing them with a healthy and happy home and, against handicaps, raising them to maturity, are performing a service with which this country could ill afford to dispense. We have all known and admired such men and women

Birth control and safe period

A third feature is the solution of the problem of birth control. Married couples who have their children deliberately and by design, must, if they do not practise sexual abstinence, have knowledge of birth control. I would like, at this point, to say something about the attitude taken by Roman Catholics to eugenics. I speak here with respect and with caution, because I do not want to misrepresent their position. I do not believe that the Church has any serious

epilepsy, drunkenness, prostitution and crime. The community is incompletely aware of the presence in its midst of these social problem families. Their existence is repressed from our consciousness like the Freudian complex. At intervals, however, the limelight of publicity is switched on to them, as in the recent report on evacuation entitled *Our Towns*.* We are just now in the middle of one of these spasms of publicity, the Press being full of accounts of the ill-treatment of children.

I have earlier mentioned the valuable work done by Miss Hilda Pocock in preparing a film on heredity. When we came to plan this enterprise, it occurred to us that the film would gain much in interest if it could show human rather than animal and plant material. We cast about for a family showing a really bad heredity, and our minds alighted on the one I have quoted. You will appreciate the delicacy of inducing a family to consent to being photographed as an example for public exhibition of what a family ought not to be. But these difficulties were skilfully surmounted by Miss Pocock, and this family appears in our film. The point, however, is this. Both parents, who had suffered much from their enormous and unwanted fertility, were aware of the burden they had placed upon the community, and declared that they were willing that the film should be taken and exhibited if it would help other people to avoid the miseries of which they had been the unwilling cause. In his spoken commentary on the film, Dr. Julian Huxley pays a tribute to this family for the generous spirit they thus showed.

An enlightened public opinion, brought to bear on these two people after the birth of the first three or four children, might have saved them as well as the community from the disasters which ensued. Let us not then neglect the importance of public opinion as an instrument of negative eugenics. It is among the chief tasks of this Society to mould this public opinion and to shape a medical service which will provide the necessary guidance on genetic questions.

Influence of environment

I now return to the Council's description of the type it wishes to see perpetuated. I don't want to exaggerate, but the position now adopted seems to me a valuable one which resolves some of the difficulties which presented themselves in the past. Let us consider a few of its implications.

In the first place, it brings out the importance of the environment in a properly considered eugenic policy. In an unfavourable en-

* 1943: Oxford University Press.

sented the position of Catholics in this matter, I can only express my regret; but I cannot help thinking that we may be within sight of scientific discoveries which will go far to reconcile religious differences about the means by which eugenic ends can be attained.

Fostering of parental instincts

There is an argument against the view that replacement could be eugenically secured through planned and wanted pregnancies. It can be alleged that parental instincts, when dissociated from their sexual precursors, are too weak to effect replacement. Throughout nature, it might be urged, sexual impulses determine the activities connected with parenthood. Parental instincts appear at the appropriate time as part of a biological sequence. They are not continually present, and of themselves would not provide a sufficient stimulus to reproduction. These critics may be right: the matter is as yet unproved. But again we can point to how reproductive behaviour generally is subject to the influence of suggestion. As Mr. Bernard Shaw pithily remarks in one of his maxims for revolutionists (*Man and Superman*, 1903):

> Acquired notions of propriety are stronger than natural instincts. It is easier to recruit for monasteries and convents than to induce an Arab woman to uncover her mouth in public, or a British Officer to walk through Bond Street in a golfing cap in an afternoon in May.

If society were organized so that the economic handicaps of parenthood were removed and the economic position of the parent and the non-parent equalized, who can predict what would be the result of a thoroughgoing propaganda in favour of larger families—a campaign supported by all the political parties, by a unanimous Press, by the Churches speaking with one voice and perhaps also by members of the Royal Family? Human reproductive behaviour can be capricious and unpredictable. Despite the absence of large numbers of men from home, fertility has gone up during this war *not* only in England, where women can avoid conscription by motherhood, but in the United States and other countries where there is no conscription for women. Trends in this war have been quite different from trends in the last; and I, for one, do not yet know the explanation No one can yet confidently say that our population could not replace itself by planned and voluntary parenthood if the necessary material conditions and moral atmosphere were created.

Before leaving this topic, I would add that the position taken up by the Council about the eugenic value of planned as against haphazard fertility is not, in essence, new, though the application is new. The central theme has been expressed by many writers. As early as

opposition to the *theory* of eugenics which holds that future generations will be affected qualitatively by the type of people who have children in this. I believe that the Catholic Church would prefer to see replacement effected by planned and wanted children than by children conceived haphazard and without reference to the conditions into which they are born. It is the *means* which eugenists have proposed which excite opposition. Sterilization, even when strictly voluntary, is opposed; so are "appliance" methods of birth control. But the Church admits the utilization of the "infertile period", and there is some doubt if this is recognized as a form of birth control. The question is essentially a verbal one. The phrase "birth control" is somewhat repugnant to Catholics to whom it essentially connotes appliance methods. My present point is that the utilization of the infertile period is permissible for Catholics, and many books have been written by Catholic authors giving practical instructions and calendars for calculating when the infertile period occurs. There can be little doubt that there is a sequence of days of variable length in every woman's cycle wherein conception is next to impossible. But the infertile period is difficult to determine with accuracy because of the varying lengths of different cycles, and particularly of their follicular phases. If a simple and practical test were devised to show when ovulation had taken place, the infertile period could be determined with almost complete certainty; and the instructions and calendars could then be consigned to the wastepaper basket.

Now the occurrence of ovulation among most mammals including the primates is signalized by the clear external changes which characterize oestrus; and there are accompanying changes in the female animal's instincts and behaviour which conduce to mating. It is, I think, a remarkable and biologically surprising fact that there are no corresponding changes, physical or psychological, in the human female. It is surely within the bounds of possibility that physiologists and biochemists between them will discover a simple test which will inform us of the occurrence of an event which, in other mammals, is so patently advertised and which is of such immense biological importance. The work on pregnandiol which is now being vigorously pursued may contribute to the discovery of such a simple test.

The reason why I have raised this delicate subject is that if such a simple test were discovered, it would enormously simplify the task of determining the infertile period, and would therefore provide Catholics with a much surer method of regulating pregnancies than is now available. Indeed, the method would be as near ideal as possible, and would be practicable by all who had the restraint necessary to avoid the days which were known to be fertile. If I have misrepre-

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1903, Bernard Shaw proposed as the goal of the revolutionary "the replacement of the old unintelligent, inevitable, almost unconscious fertility by an intelligently controlled conscious fertility, and the elimination of the mere voluptuary from the evolutionary process". Shaw, Galton, and Saleeby expressed similar ideas; and if I understand it rightly, this has been the standpoint which Dr. Marie Stopes has eloquently and consistently put forward in her pamphlets and books. Such novelty as the idea may now have, springs from our greater awareness of the distinction between the planned and the haphazard pregnancy. This awareness, in its turn, is the result of a more open and objective consideration of matters which were previously regarded as indecent or taboo. For such a change of attitude in this country, we are probably more indebted to Mr. Havelock Ellis and to Dr. Stopes than to any other two people. Much has been written, at all times, about the blessings brought by "quiverfuls" of children. What is new in the Council's recent statement is the idea of *eugenic selection* by means of a favourable environment and of voluntary parenthood. The general idea has been clearly put by Mr. Frederick Osborn, the Honorary Secretary of the American Eugenics Society, in his valuable and recent book, *Preface to Eugenics*.* I discussed this matter at some length with Mr. Osborn at a Population Conference held in Paris in 1937, and it was a pleasure to discover on what parallel lines the American and British Societies were thinking and working.

2. *Eugenics and demography*

The second of the three features which make the prospects for the Eugenics Society favourable at the present time can be briefly dealt with. It has been possible, through the generosity of Mr. Laurence Cadbury, to re-establish the Population Investigation Committee on the same flourishing basis as existed before the war. Dr. David Glass is now back with an enhanced reputation as whole-time research secretary, and is as busy as he was before the war. The Population Investigation Committee is accommodated rent-free in the Society's premises, and it is hoped in future to devote a fixed amount of space in each issue of the *Eugenics Review* to the publication of new demographic material supplied by Dr. Glass and by other members of the Investigation Committee.† The activities of

* 1940. Harper and Brothers, New York.

† *Later note.* The Committee is now (1950) integrated with the London School of Economics. It produces its own quarterly journal *Population Studies* (C.U.P.).

our Society can thus be linked with the widening interest in demography which is now being evinced on all sides. Indeed, demography which deals with quantitative, and eugenics which is concerned with qualitative, considerations are essentially complementary.

3. *Royal Commission on Population*

I now turn to the third feature of the present period, which is of general and not merely domestic interest, and which makes the prospect good. I refer to the Royal Commission on Population.

The appointment of the Royal Commission was preceded by much discussion and controversy. It is a fact that the project did not at first commend itself to the Population Investigation Committee. Indeed, a letter was published in *The Times* in July 1943, from Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders, in his capacity of Chairman of the committee, pointing out that the appointment of a Royal Commission would come better at a later date, when further essential information about fertility trends had been yielded by the Population Statistics Act. But his letter did not alter the course of events, and in December 1943 the constitution of the Royal Commission and of its three expert committees was announced. It was an agreeable surprise for us to see how well represented were the Eugenics Society and the Population [illegible] expert [illegible] mittee [illegible] source[illegible] not neglecting the qualitative aspects of its subject. Our Council has submitted a memorandum to the Royal Commission which contains some of the points which I have put before you this evening. If these arguments are well-grounded—and of this the Royal Commission are better judges than we are, being impartial and having heard all other aspects of the case—they will, I have no doubt, be given due weight.*

CONCLUSION

I have now finished my lecture. I have given a retrospect of eugenics, wherein its origins are traced to the Darwinian theory; I have described the difficulties and conflicts which arose from the attempts to apply this theory to the betterment of man; I have briefly recapitulated the history of the Society up to date; and I have given reasons for thinking that the prospects before us are better than they have ever been before.

* *Later note.* The report of the Royal Commission was published in June 1949.

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